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# *The Red, Red Flowers*



**By M. E. Chaber**

**I**t was one of those mornings when nothing was going right. I reached the office early because I was expecting a phone call. It still hadn't come. The mail hadn't been delivered, so I was reading the morning paper. The Giants had lost the day before. The Yankees had won a doubleheader from Boston. When it's that kind of day everything goes wrong. In disgust, I turned to the front pages. Things weren't any better there. The Russians had caught a second U-2 pilot and his plane, and were promising a quick trial for the pilot. I put the paper down and stared malignantly at the phone that didn't ring.

The name is March. Milo March. I'm an insurance investigator. At least that's what it says on my license and on the door of my Madison Avenue office. Which means that if you kill your wife, hoping to collect her insurance to spend on that blonde you met the other night, I'll probably be around looking for you. That's the general idea anyway. But everyone must have been on a temporary goodness jag. I hadn't had a job in two weeks.

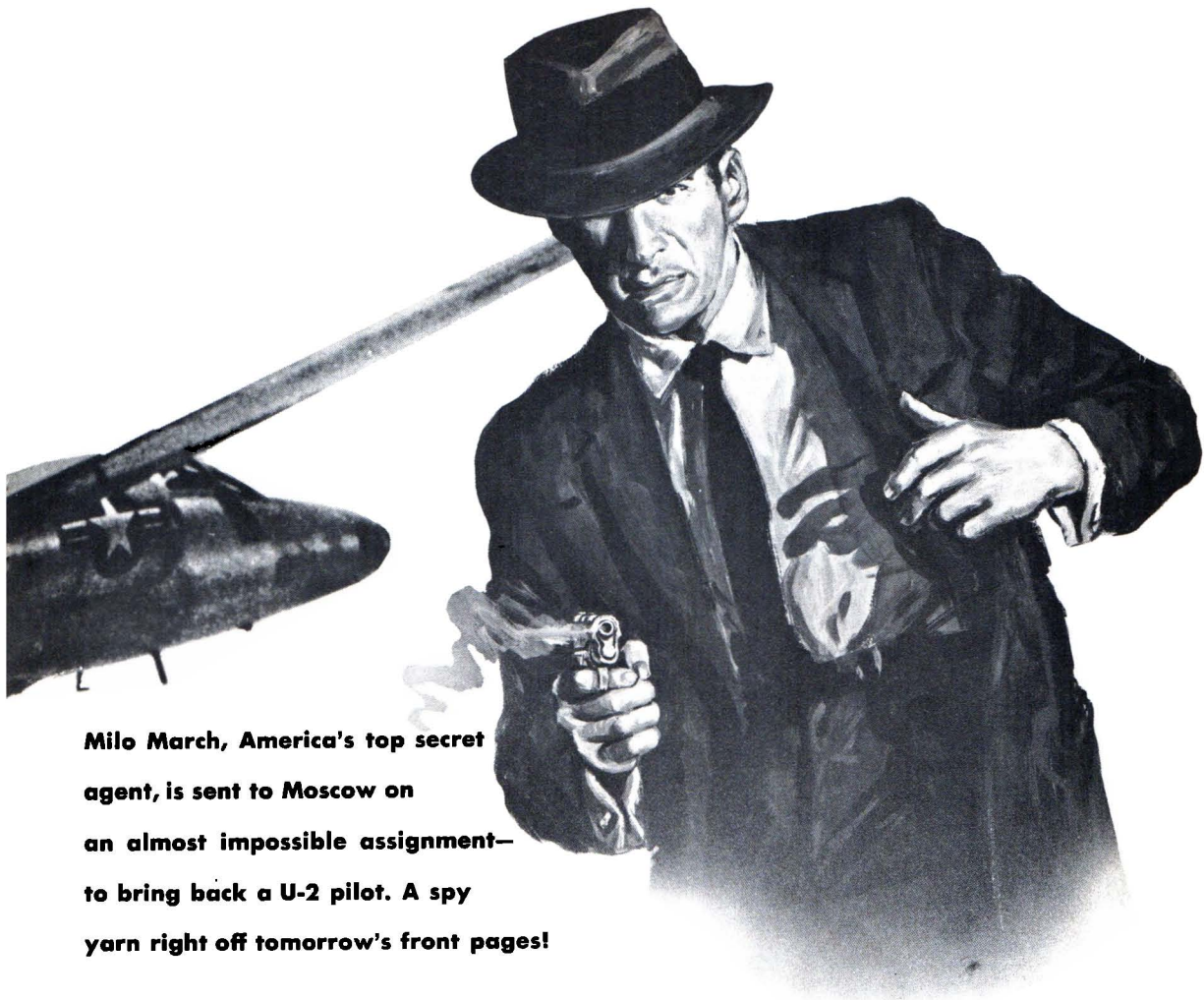
The mail arrived. All bills. So it was still the same kind of day. Then the door opened and there was another mailman, this one with a registered letter. I

signed for it, and he went away. I opened the letter and the day was complete. It said that Major Milo March, U.S. Army Reserve, was recalled to active duty. I was to report to an address in Washington. The date was that same day. The time was sixteen hundred, or four o'clock. Which meant that I had about six hours in which to make it.

I thought of ignoring the whole thing, pretending I had never gotten the letter. But it had been registered, and when the Army wants you they only give you two choices. You can walk in or be dragged in. So I made arrangements with another investigator to handle anything that came in for me, and notified my answering service to route the calls to him. Then I went downtown to my apartment in Greenwich Village. I dug out my uniform and discovered it didn't need anything but a pressing. I took it into the tailor, and went to the Blue Mill for a couple of martinis while it was being pressed.

At two o'clock that afternoon, looking every inch the well-dressed Army officer, I was at LaGuardia Field boarding a plane for Washington. An hour later I was telling a Washington cab driver where to take me. I didn't give him the address in the orders, but a street





**Milo March, America's top secret agent, is sent to Moscow on an almost impossible assignment—to bring back a U-2 pilot. A spy yarn right off tomorrow's front pages!**

corner nearby. When I got out of the cab I still had about a half hour to spare. I spent it in the nearest gin mill over another martini. I believe that Regulations state that an officer shouldn't drink while on duty, but then I wouldn't really be on duty until after I reported. Finally I walked down the street, looking for the address. There were three vacant lots in the middle of the block where builders had just begun to excavate. Beyond them were several old brownstone houses of the type which in recent years have been taken over by government bureaus. I walked past the vacant lots and reached the first building. I looked at the number. It was too high. I turned and retraced my steps. But after a few steps I realized that the number in my orders, if it had ever existed, had been where one of the vacant lots was now. I cursed to myself. If I'd had any doubts before about who was responsible for my return to active duty, they were gone.

I heard steps on the sidewalk while I was still standing there with the orders in my hand. I looked around. A pleasant-faced young man was strolling toward me. I almost ignored him, but then I took another look. There was something a little too studied about his casualness, and I knew I was right. I turned back to

the vacant lot and stared at it innocently.

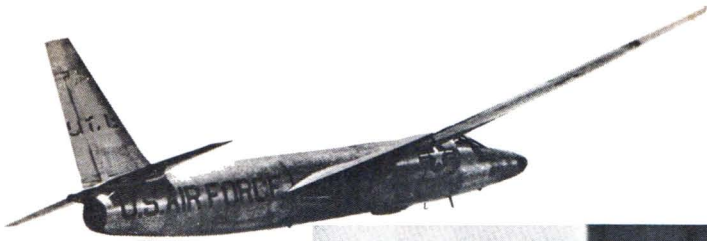
"Pardon me, Major," the young man said as he reached me, "is there anything wrong?"

I turned my innocence on him. "Why," I said, "I seem to have been given the wrong address."

"Perhaps I can help you," he said. "I know the neighborhood rather well. What address are you looking for?" He moved in slightly behind me as though to look over my shoulder. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught a slight movement of his right arm and I heard the scrape of something against cloth.

"This one," I said, holding up the paper.

I knew that the movement would catch his eyes for at least a couple of seconds. I lifted my left foot and brought it down hard on his right instep. There was a gasp of pain from him. I dropped the paper and pivoted, sending a right to his stomach just hard enough to bend him over. I chopped across his neck with the edge of my left hand and he dropped. He was unconscious—which was the way I wanted him. A slender blackjack was lying on the sidewalk next to him. I left him and the blackjack where they had fallen. I picked up my orders, folded the paper and put it back in my pocket. (Continued on next page)



Khrushchev is shown holding up a photo of the U-2 plane flown by Francis Powers. Milo March, in M.E. Chaber's thriller, was sent to Moscow to bring back a similar pilot—plus a map that could have been dynamite in the wrong hands. Far right, Moscow's Hall of Columns and the state prosecutor, both of whom figure in the accompanying thriller by an old master



### RED, RED FLOWERS *continued*

Fortunately the street was still empty, so there was no one to raise a cry about the man on the street. I walked back to the first house beyond the lots. It seemed like the logical place.

This time I looked in. There was a tiny vestibule with an inner door, but there were no mailboxes, nameplates or bells in it. Beyond the second door, I could see a long corridor with doors on either side. About half way down the corridor there was a soldier, obviously standing guard. I could have just gone in and presented my orders and he probably would have escorted me into the office. But I was sore and I didn't want it that way.

I stepped back out on the street. The young man was still lying on the sidewalk. I skirted around the side of the brownstone and went to the back. There was a parking area there with four cars in it. One was an Army car with three stars on it. That proved I was right.

I hunted around the back until I found a greasy cloth that had been used on one of the cars. I slipped up to the rear door and tried it. It was locked, but it took me only a moment to pick it. I opened the door just enough to slip the rag, bunched up, in between it and the sill at the bottom. I struck a match and held it to the cloth. As soon as it began to smolder, I hurried back to the front of the house. I slipped into the vestibule, against the wall, and watched the soldier on guard. After a few seconds he began to sniff and look around. He caught a glimpse of smoke trickling in through the back door and hurried toward it.

The minute he moved I had the second door open and was going quietly down the hall behind him. He was bending over the burning rag as I reached the door he'd been guarding. I opened the door silently and stepped inside. I was in a small, empty office. There was an open door leading into another larger office. There were voices coming from that other office.

"I don't see why you had to do it this way," a man was saying. "We know March's work well enough. Why didn't you just have him come straight here and get it over with?"

"I like to test men before I give them assignments," said another voice. It was one I knew all too well. He chuckled. "O'Connor should be here with him any minute. It'll be worth a lot to see March's face when he comes here in the office."

I lit a cigarette and went to stand in the doorway. "You don't have to wait that long," I said. "Take a good look now."

The three men in the room whirled to look at me. I knew all three of them. One of them was George Hillyer, the civilian head of the Central Intelligence Agency. The other civilian was Philip Emerson, his assistant. And the third man was a big red-faced Army officer with three bright shining stars on his collar. Lieutenant General Sam Roberts. The two civilians were quickly over their surprise, and I noticed they were both grinning but being careful to hide the fact from the general. He was still staring at me with his mouth open, but his face was beginning to get redder.

"Old Tricky Roberts," I said. "You haven't changed since the days when you couldn't steal a chicken without being caught." During the fracas that was known as World War II, General Roberts and I had been in OSS together, working behind the German lines. But he'd been a colonel then.

"You're talking to a superior officer, Major March," the general said. His voice was as stiff as an overstarched collar. "I could break you for that."

"Anyone who'll talk to a superior officer ought to be broken," I retorted. "Don't give me that malarkey, General. I know you since you were a chicken colonel, polishing those eagles until they screamed. You're in trouble, or I wouldn't have been recalled to active duty. You break me and who'll pull your chestnuts from the fire?"

His face was a deep purple. "Silence," he roared. "How the hell did you get in here? O'Connor—" He broke off. "Anyway, Sanders was just outside the door with orders not to let anyone in," he finished.

There was an interruption. The outer door opened and two men came into the office. The first one was the





soldier who had been on guard. He was followed by the young man I'd met in the street. He was limping and rubbing his neck.

"I beg your pardon, General," the soldier said, "but the back door was unlocked and somebody had stuffed an oily rag in it and set it on fire. But I didn't see anybody around."

The general glared at me and I gave him a sweet smile. He swung back to the two men. "What kind of an outfit is this?" he said angrily. "Can't anyone carry out a simple order without fouling it up?"

"The only one who's goofed around here," I said, "is a certain three star general. First you send me orders with a phony address on them. Then you send a pet bird dog out to point me into a trap. Just so you can get a belly laugh when I'm dragged in by the heels."

"Well," the general said lamely, "I just wanted to see if civilian life had softened you up." He glanced at the two men in the doorway. "How about it, O'Connor?"

It was the young man who answered. "I'd say it hadn't, sir. I was in back of him but I never had a chance."

"All right, go home, O'Connor. Take a couple of days off. Sanders, go back and wait in the car for me." The general swung his gaze back to me. "So right away you come in and beat up one of my best men, then you pick the lock on the (Continued on page 82)

# The Red, Red Flowers

Continued from page 37

back door, shove in a burning rag—which could have burned down the building—to draw away the guard just so you could make a grandstand play by breaking in here?"

"You want to play games," I said, "that's what you'll get. You never saw the day you could outsmart me. You tried it plenty of times when we were behind the lines together."

Any mention of the war always relaxed him. He leaned back in his chair and beamed at me. "It was a great war, wasn't it, Milo?"

"Save it for your memoirs," I said. "What kind of trouble are you in that you have to drag me back into this monkey suit?"

"You're right about it being trouble, Major," George Hillyer said. "The three of us discussed it and decided you were the best man for the job. . . . Yesterday the Russians got another of our U-2 planes."

"I read about it in the paper this morning," I said. "I thought those were the planes that flew so high no one could shoot them down. Do the Russians have a new type gun?"

"No," the general growled. "The first plane had a jet flame-out and went down to thirty thousand feet. They couldn't have touched him at seventy thousand. The second plane had gone down to twenty thousand feet, under orders, when the Russians hit his plane."

"Why so low?"

"To make a drop," Hillyer said. "The pilot was supposed to drop ammunition, money and information to a resistance group inside Russia. They got him before he succeeded in making the drop."

"What does this have to do with me?" I asked.

It was Hillyer who answered. "You've heard of Narodno Trudovoi Soyuz, Major?"

I nodded. "The National Alliance of Russian Solidarists. It's a group of anti-Communist Russians."

"Right. Their headquarters is in West Germany, but they have thousands of agents inside Russia. No one but Russians are permitted in the group. They have been very successful, mostly because of what they call the molecule system. It's something like the old Communist cell. Each group of agents in Russia consists of three persons, and those three do not know any other group. If one is captured and tortured he can only inform on two other members. These NTS people have been very valuable to us in providing information. In return we have supplied them with money and materials. Our pilot was making a drop to an American agent in Russia who was then to contact a number of these underground molecules."

"Wasn't it dangerous having a man there who knew the different

groups?"

"He didn't know them. The drop included a coded message to him giving him the location of the groups. The message was concealed behind a map of Russia which would be part of a regular U-2 pilot's equipment. If anything happened to the plane and pilot we wanted the Russians to think it was a regular flight."

"Did they?"

"So far they have. But the map is one of the things they have on display in the Hall of Columns in Moscow. And the pilot knows there's a message on the back of the map. We don't believe he's being brainwashed, or anything like that, but there's always a chance that he may try to use the information during his trial or later in prison to make a trade. If the Russians get the message, hundreds of agents will die, and we will lose a valuable source of information."

I was beginning to get the idea and I didn't like it. "You mean you want the pilot and the message snatched out of the Russian's hands?"

"Exactly."

"I could smell that one coming," I said. "I don't like it. You know, I've been in East Germany twice and Russia once. They have my fingerprints and considerable information about me. It won't be easy even to get into the country."

"We have that problem licked," the general said. It was the first time he'd spoken in several minutes.

"How?"

"It is not yet known," he said, "but we have a U-3 plane. Same as the U-2 but it will carry two men. We fly you over Russia at seventy thousand feet and you parachute in. Perfectly safe."

"For everybody expect me," I said.

"It's fairly safe," Hillyer said. "We have a few days time. We're going to have you brush up on your Russian and see that you get all the other information you need. We're providing you with clothes and identification, everything you need to prove that you're a Russian. We know you speak Russian well enough to fool them. We can give you one more bit of help. There will be one underground molecule—that is three persons—who will assist you and be under your orders. For the rest you will be on your own."

"From fourteen miles up in the air?" I said. "That's really being on your own."

When the Army gets an idea that's it. You'd think ideas were invented at West Point. Anyway, it went the way they said. I spent the next several days polishing my Russian. I took special classes each day and even went to sleep at night plugged into sleep lessons. In between I was fitted out for a pressure suit for the parachute jump, and given a complete set of clothes that had been made in Russia. I was given all kinds of identification cards, including a Party card and proof that I was a worker

from Rostov who was spending two weeks in Moscow. I was even provided with a short-handled shovel, to bury the pressure suit after I landed; the shovel also had been made in Russia. Five days after reporting for duty, I was on an Army plane headed for Pakistan.

Three more days went by after we landed there.

I was introduced to the pilot who would fly me over Russia—a tall, blond boy from Indiana—and stuffed into a pressure suit. I felt, and probably looked, like an invader from Mars. I was led out to the plane, a stubby-winged, sleek-looking black plane with a needle nose. I climbed into the rear seat and hooked my helmet into the intercom. I checked to be sure that I had the knapsack that was going to parachute in with me.

“You plugged in, Major?” the pilot asked. His voice coming through the earphones in the helmet had a hollow sound.

“I seem to be,” I said.

“All set, Major?”

“As much as I’ll ever be,” I grunted. “But I have a feeling that this is one thing which will never become habit forming with me.”

“There’s nothing to it,” he said cheerfully. “You don’t even have to pull a ripcord. Your chute will open automatically when you’ve fallen about eight miles.”

“They didn’t tell me that jokes were a part of this or I wouldn’t have come,” I said. “Where are you dropping me?”

“About ten miles southeast of Moscow. That’ll give you the rest of the night to walk into the city.”

“How can you be sure that’s where you’ll drop me?”

“Major, in this weather, I could drop you from this height and make you land on a dime. I don’t even have to do any guessing about it. The whole thing’s worked out mathematically.”

We flew along in silence the next few minutes. Then he spoke again. “Better start getting ready, Major. Be sure you’ve got everything you want to take with you. It’s hard coming back after something you forgot. There’s a lever in front of you. See it?”

“Yeah.”

“When I tell you to go, disconnect your communication cord and pull that lever. It’ll drop you through the bottom of the ship and you’ll be on your way. Okay?”

“Okay,” I muttered, but I wasn’t sure it was. I felt the way I had the first time I had a serious date with a girl—lightheaded. I checked to be sure the knapsack was fastened to my shoulders. I would have liked to check the rest of my equipment but I didn’t know anything about it, so I waited. “Go ahead, Major,” the pilot said quietly. “And good luck.”

“Thanks,” I said. I reached up and pulled the cord from my helmet. I took a deep breath and pushed the

lever in front of me.

After what seemed a very long time, I felt the tug of the parachute as it opened. After that I was vaguely aware of swinging like a pendulum from it, but it was a pleasant sensation. Then almost before I knew it, the ground came up to meet me and I went tumbling across it until the chute collapsed. I managed to un-buckle it and then take my helmet off. There was a gentle breeze and the smell of earth, but there were no lights.

I rested for a couple of minutes, then took the knapsack off my back. I removed my gloves and opened the pack. There was a small flashlight at the very top. Shielding the light, I looked around. I was in the middle of a plowed field.

I took the other clothes from the knapsack, and quickly undressed and put them on. I took the shovel and dug a hole in the field. I gathered up the parachute and folded it, dropping it and the pressure suit into the hole. I checked the knapsack to be sure that everything was out of it, then dropped it in too and shoveled the dirt back. When I was sure that the spot looked like the rest of the field, I used the light to check my compass and headed off in the direction of Moscow. About a mile on the way, I threw the shovel into a ditch, after first wiping the handle clean so there would be no fingerprints on it.

It was just four o’clock in the morning when I approached the edge of the city. I had already decided it would be foolish to start marching through the streets at that hour in the morning, so I found a field with some bushes in it and curled up and went to sleep.

It was shortly after eight when I awakened. Now there was some traffic on the road, mostly trucks. No one paid any attention to me as I walked into the city. I soon reached a bus stop, where several workers were waiting for a bus, and I joined them. I was dressed a little better than the other men—because I was, after all, on my vacation—but no one looked at me twice. I rode the bus into the center of Moscow, and began to breathe a little easier.

It didn’t take me long to find the address I’d been given. It was one of the new apartment buildings on Kotelnicheskaya Embankment. It was in Block D, Entrance C. I worked my way through the corridors until I found the apartment. I knocked on the door, and hoped someone was home.

The door was opened by a girl. She was small, dark-haired and pretty. Even the loose-fitting clothes couldn’t conceal that she had a full figure.

“Dobroe utro,” I said. “U vas est mesto dlae mende?” It was part of a recognition code.

“Prichodite v luboe vremae,” she answered. “It is lovely in Moscow this time of year.”

“Yes,” I said. “I have been admir-

ing the red, red flowers that grow around the Kremlin.”

She smiled and stepped back opening the door wider. “Come in,” she said.

I entered the apartment and she closed the door. I looked around. There were two rooms, small but attractive. I turned back to the girl.

“We were expecting you today,” she said. “I am Natasha Naristova.”

“I’m Milo March,” I said, “but here I will be known as Mikhail Mikhailovich.” I showed her my identification.

“It is well done,” she said, after looking at the papers. “You had no trouble in finding the apartment?”

“No. I’ve been in Moscow before.”

“I know,” she said. “I remember reading about the capitalist spy, Milo March. But your country proved that you couldn’t have been here, didn’t they?”

I nodded. “Do you live here alone?” “No, with my brother. He is one of us. He is at work now.”

“You don’t work?”

“Oh, yes. I am on the staff of Pravda. This is my day off. What are your plans? All we were told was to expect an agent, and to give him any help he needed.”

“I want to go to the opening of the trial of the American pilot tomorrow. I have to get him and part of his possessions out of the country. Both are a threat to your group.”

“That will be difficult,” she said gravely. “I do not see how it can be done by only four of us.”

“I will try to do most of it myself,” I told her. “I don’t want to risk you more than I have to.”

“We will do what is needed. Tonight, the third member of our group will be here, and it can be discussed. You will stay here as long as you need to. Is there anything you would like now?”

“Some sleep,” I said. “I had only three or four hours in a field this morning.”

She led the way into the second room, and indicated the two beds. I stretched out on one and was soon asleep.

I was awake by the middle of the afternoon. The girl was in the other room, reading. She made tea, and we spent the rest of the afternoon talking. At about five o’clock, her brother arrived. He was a big, blond fellow about my own age. His name was Ilya. He seemed even more pleased than his sister to learn that I was an American agent. During dinner, which Natasha cooked, he plied me with questions about America.

Shortly after dinner, there was a knock on the door. Ilya went and opened it. The man who entered was short and dark, with what seemed to be a perpetually-scowling face. He was introduced to me as the third member of their NTS molecule. His name was Yuri Mogilev. Natasha brought out a bottle of vodka and filled four glasses. When they were passed around, she lifted her own.

“To a free Russia,” she said, and

we all drank. Then she brought out a chessboard and set it up between her brother and Yuri. They began to put the pieces on the board.

"We always bring out the chessboard," Natasha said. "Everyone believes that is the reason Yuri visits us so often. So if anyone comes while we are having a meeting, there is only a chess game."

The men moved the pieces around a few times and then settled back. "Now," said Ilya, "we are ready to discuss your problems. You have papers?"

I nodded. "I am Mikhail Mikhailovich, from Rostov. There I am a minor clerk in the offices of Internal Affairs. I have a two weeks vacation, which I am spending in Moscow. I have all the necessary papers."

"Good. You will stay here, of course. If there are any questions, you and I were in the army together and that is why you are visiting me." He turned to Yuri. "You know the American pilot who goes on trial tomorrow? The task is to get him out of the country."

Yuri pursed his lips and scowled even more. "It is a big order. They will make the most of him for propaganda, and he will be well guarded. You have a plan?"

I shook my head. "I'll try to make it up as I go along. Will I have any trouble getting into the trial tomorrow?"

"No. That will be open to the public."

"Do any of you know where the pilot is being held prisoner?"

Ilya glanced at Yuri, who nodded. "The Voldovna Prison. It is where they take important political prisoners before their trials."

"Can I get any sort of rough plan of the prison, and the location of the pilot's cell?"

"I can get that for you," Ilya said. "By tomorrow night, I think. Anything else?"

"I don't think so . . . I have considerable money with me, most of it in American dollars. I'll probably need to spend most of it in getting out. Will the dollars be better for bribes?"

"I do not think so," Ilya said. "I think you should change the dollars in the black market. Yuri can take care of it."

The four of us sat up talking late into the night, mostly about America, before we finally went to sleep. When I awakened the next morning I was alone in the apartment. There was a note from Natasha telling me where to find things for breakfast, and how to get to the Hall of Columns. I had some rolls and tea, and left.

A crowd was already gathering for the trial. I entered the building with three or four others dressed pretty much as I was. Out in the corridor, there was a long, glass-covered case and a uniformed MVD man on guard. We fled by and looked at the things that had been taken

from the captured pilot. There were a good many guns with ammunition, several watches, a big stack of ruble notes, a small bottle with a card identifying it as poison, all of the pilot's personal things, and the map. The latter was all I was interested in. Under the guise of gazing at the collection, I studied the case. It was locked as well as being guarded.

I followed the others into the large room, which had once been the grand ballroom of the old Noblemen's Club, where the trial was to be held. It was flooded with lights, and there were several television cameras set up. About half the room was filled with newspapermen, many of them from the Western countries, including America. Fortunately, I didn't see any who might recognize me. Not that they might anyway, for this was going to be a big show and all eyes would be riveted on it.

The trial was quickly called to order, and the prosecutor faced the prisoner. "What is your name?" he asked.

"James Cooper," he said, when the question had been translated into English.

"What is your nationality?"

"American."

"What is your profession?"

"Pilot."

There followed the reading of a long indictment of his crimes against the Soviet Union. I breathed a little easier when I realized that it contained no mention of his intending to contact the underground. It did list the guns and ammunition but merely charged that he'd had them in case of crashing inside Russia. When the indictment was finished, Cooper asked how he pleaded.

"Guilty," he said in a firm voice.

Lieutenant General Borisoglebsky, the presiding judge, leaned forward. "Weren't you aware that flying over Russia was a hostile act?" he asked.

"I didn't think about it," Cooper said.

"Didn't you realize your action might bring about a war?"

"Things like that were for the people who sent me to worry about."

And so it went throughout the day, the questions and answers droning on evenly. Cooper wasn't volunteering any information, although it seemed to me that he was being more cooperative than he had to be. But then, he may have been ordered to do so in case of capture.

Ilya and Natasha were already at the apartment when I got there. We had dinner together, and shortly afterward Yuri arrived. He brought a newspaper with him and we took turns reading the story of that days trial. They were milking it for everything they could.

Ilya had brought a hand-drawn map of Voldovna Prison, with the location of Cooper's cell marked on it. I examined it carefully but the more I looked at it, the more impossible the job seemed. There were three outer

doors to penetrate before reaching the cell blocks, and each one of those doors was locked and guarded.

"It looks difficult," I admitted faintly.

"I think it is impossible," Natasha said. She'd been leaning over my shoulder, looking at the map with me. "We are told that even a regular visitor, with an official pass to visit a prisoner, must go through questioning by the three guards, and each guard communicates with the next one before you pass through the door. It is almost certain that they will be even more careful with an American prisoner."

"The biggest problem is time," I muttered. "How long do you suppose the trial will last?"

"Exactly two more days," Natasha said.

"Exactly? How do you know that?" I wondered.

"The hall is reserved for only two more days. And the writers and cameramen from *Pravda* are assigned for that time. They already have other assignments for the third day from now."

"At least, it lets us know how much time we have," I said. "There is one other way. I don't like it, but maybe we have no choice. Ilya, is there any way we can get complete details on the transportation of Cooper to and from the trial? I mean routes, time, method of taking him and the number of guards."

"I think so," he said slowly. "There is a man with whom I sometimes play chess at lunch time. He would know, and I think he could be bribed."

"I'll give you the money," I said. "Try to get it tomorrow. Can you take extra time at lunch or take the afternoon off?"

"I can take the afternoon off."

"Then bring whatever you get here, and I'll meet you. There are a couple of other things I want to ask you about, but first there is something I want to do. I'll be back soon."

"Where are you going?" Natasha asked.

"Out," I said with a smile.

"Let me go with you," she said. "I can be of help."

"Not this time," I told her firmly. "I'll be back within an hour." I smiled at her and left.

It was still early in the evening, but there wasn't much traffic. I hit the small side streets and began walking and looking. I'd been searching for more than a half-hour before I found what I was looking for. I was on a narrow, dimly-lighted street. There were two or three small restaurants and a few shops along it, and the rest were apartment houses. There was a man walking ahead of me, as he reached a street light I saw he was wearing an MVD uniform. I quickened my step.

I timed it carefully so as not to get too near until he was in between street lights. He started to cross a narrow street angling off to the left, and I hurried forward.



"Comrade," I called, just loud enough to reach him but not enough to attract the attention of anyone in the apartment houses.

He hesitated and looked back, peering at me. "What is it?" he called. He sounded irritable.

"I need help," I said. I was almost up to him.

"I am off duty," he said, his tone clearly indicating that he didn't want to be bothered.

"I will take only a minute," I said. I reached him and looked around. There was no one on the street within two blocks of us. "It is only that I need some advice about something I found on the street."

"What is it?" he asked.

I reached in my pocket and pulled out a piece of paper. I held it out. "This," I said.

He took the paper and held it up, trying to get enough light on it to see it. I chopped my hand across his neck as hard as I could. He grunted deep in his throat and started to fall. I caught him and dragged him into the deep shadows of the alley. I went back to retrieve the paper I'd handed him. Then I went back and quickly stripped off his uniform. I rolled it up into a ball with the gun inside, and tucked the whole thing under my arm. It had taken no more than three or four minutes, and he was still unconscious as I stepped back to the street and walked away.

The uniform looked like any bunch of clothes under my arm and I didn't draw a second glance from any of the few people I met on the way back to the apartment. Even so, I felt better when Natasha opened the door in answer to my knock. I stepped inside and she closed the door.

"I am glad you are back," she said. "What do you have there?"

I unrolled the uniform, and smiled at the surprise on all three faces.

"What is it for?"

"I also have to do something to repatriate that paper Cooper was carrying before they find out about it. That comes before anything else tomorrow. I won't need help. This will either work simply and quickly—or not at all. Let's return to the second operation. If Ilya can get the information tomorrow, I will need two things. One will be easy, the other not."

"What do you want, Milo?" Natasha asked quietly.

"First, some old clothes. They should be working clothes and the older the better."

"We have some of Ilya's that should fit you," Natasha said.

"Any way they could be traced to him if anything happens?" I asked.

She shook her head. "They came from the government store here, and there must be millions like them in Russia."

"All right. Now, the hard one. I want to know where I can steal a car. But not any car. This should be an old one that looks as if it's about to fall apart. Maybe the kind of car that a man who was a good mechanic

could recover from a junk heap and fix up."

"That's Yuri's department," Ilya said.

The short, dark man was lost in thought for a minute. Then he smiled. It was only the second time I'd seen him smile. "I know just the car," he said. "It would even be well if it were traced later, for the man who owns it is an informer on his neighbors. I can steal it any evening."

"Tomorrow evening? Or tomorrow afternoon?"

He scowled. "Tomorrow evening for certain. Perhaps in the afternoon. Sometimes he is home by three o'clock."

"All right," I said. "We'll see what happens. Everything will depend on the information Ilya gets tomorrow. If it looks possible, then tomorrow afternoon you will show me where the car is, and I will steal it and make the try."

"If you try to rescue the pilot tomorrow," Natasha said, "what do we do?"

"You will have already done it," I told her. "The plans, the car, advice, that's about it."

They all three started to protest.

"Wait," I said. "I was sent to do this job. The way I'm planning it, everything will have a better chance if I do it alone. More people would only make them suspicious and we might even get in each other's way. And there's another thing. The three of you have important work to do here. My orders are to use your assistance as much as I have to, but not to risk you unduly. But there is one other thing you can be putting your minds to."

"What?"

"If I succeed in rescuing Cooper, I'll need some place to hide him until we can make a break for it."

"We could keep him here," Natasha said.

I shook my head. "Too dangerous, unless we have no choice. It should be somewhere else."

"There might be another place," she said. "There is a girl I know slightly, who has a one-room apartment on the next floor. She is away on vacation now. If we could get into her apartment in some way..."

"I can get in," I said. "So that's settled."

"But how will you get him out of Russia?" Ilya asked.

I grinned. "More theft," I said. "My idea is to try to get to some field where we can steal a plane. A fast one. Then Cooper can fly us out. It's risky, but probably safer than anything else. Once I've gotten him, you can be sure of one thing—the bloodhounds will be over every inch of Russia."

"I like the way you think," Yuri exclaimed. "Perhaps I could go with you."

"No, Yuri," I said. "Your job is here, and, believe me, it's a much tougher one."

"Milo is right, Yuri," Natasha said. "But in the meantime," I said, "you can be thinking about where we might have the best chance of getting a plane, and the best way to reach it."

Yuri nodded, trying not to show his disappointment.

We talked generally for another hour or so, then Yuri left, and the three of us went to sleep.

I was up early the next morning, and back at the trial as soon as the building was open. While I was waiting for everyone to file into the trial room, I took another look at the case. The MVD man was guarding. The map was still there. I didn't want to attract attention by too much interest in the case, so I strolled around the building. There were several offices around at the other end of it, mostly filled with either MVD men or what seemed to be Russian VIPs. I got a couple of questioning glances, and soon retreated to the trial room.

The hearing was much the same as the day before. It was clear that they were more bent on making the United States look guilty than in bringing out anything on Cooper.

Just before the midday recess, the defense attorney got up to answer one of the prosecutor's blasts. He painted a glowing picture of Cooper as a simple Middle-Western boy, with an honest, peace-loving family, who never knew what he was getting in to. He said that these were the kind of Americans the Russians understood and liked. And he wound up by saying, "To show the world the true meaning of socialist humanitarianism, this boy's father and two brothers are on their way to Russia right now as guests of the government. They will arrive in Moscow tonight, and be here by his side tomorrow when he once more faces this court."

There was a burst of applause from the audience, and then court was adjourned until afternoon. I hurried back to the apartment. Ilya was already there. To my surprise, so was Natasha.

"I decided to take the afternoon off, too," she explained. "It is not difficult in my job."

I nodded and turned to Ilya. "How did you make out?"

"Fine," he said. He brought a piece of paper from his pocket. "But it cost fifteen thousand rubles."

"It's worth it," I said. "Let's see it."

The three of us bent over the sheet of paper. Ilya had made a crude drawing of the route between the prison and the Hall of Columns, with all the streets marked. The time of departure, both morning and afternoon, was written down. And the other information I had wanted. He was transported in an official MVD car with three guards, one of whom drove. The driver was an MVD man, the other two were KGB. That made it a little tougher, but it still looked possible.

"I think I can do it," I said. "We'll talk more about it when I come back."

The three of us had lunch, and

then I went into the other room and changed into the MVD uniform.

By the time I reached the Hall of Columns, the trial was already underway—which was what I wanted. The corridor was empty except for the glass-covered case and the solitary guard. I entered the building from the other side, and walked down the corridor to the front. This time no one paid any attention to me as I passed the offices. I was only another uniform.

The guard at the case looked up in curiosity as I approached. "What is this?" he asked. "Am I being relieved early?"

"For a few minutes," I said. "I will stay here until you return—if you do."

"What do you mean by that?"

I shrugged. "Perhaps they will give you another assignment. All I know is that I was called into the office and ordered to come here. You are to report there at once to Colonel Sergeiev."

"Who the devil is Colonel Sergeiev?" he demanded.

"From the Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Besopasnosti," I said.

He paled at the mention of the KGB. "What do they want to talk to me about?"

"How should I know?" I retorted. "Do you see any decorations on my uniform that they should take me into their confidence? I only follow orders as you do. Any yours are to go at once to the office and see Colonel Sergeiev. I will guard the spy's things. Although I do not think he will be trying to get them back."

"That is true," he said, but his mind was on other things. "Well, I suppose I should be going . . ."

"I think so," I agreed solemnly.

He started off with a worried look on his face, then looked back. "What is your name, comrade?"

"Chernicov," I said. "Good luck, comrade."

He nodded absent-mindedly, and walked on. I watched impatiently for him to disappear around the bend in the corridor. Then I would have two minutes, three at the very most, before he discovered there was no Colonel Sergeiev, no Chernicov, and no orders for him to report at the office. And within one minute after that there would be several men pounding down the corridor looking for me.

He moved out of sight. There was no time for niceties, such as picking the lock. I lifted my gun and smashed the butt down on the glass. It broke with a crash. I reached through the jagged spears of glass and grabbed the map. I moved swiftly toward the front entrance, stuffing it into my pocket. Even as I went through the door, I thought I heard a shout somewhere back in the corridor.

I went down the steps to the street level, and looked around. Immediately in front of the hall a number ZIM limousines were parked with no one

in them. Farther down to the left a Pobeda, something like a small Chrevolet, was parked in front of a tobacco store. A man was sitting behind the wheel. I turned and strode quickly down to it.

"Move this car out of here," I ordered, "and make it fast."

"But I'm waiting for someone in there," he said, gesturing toward the Hall of Columns.

"I don't care who you're waiting for," I snapped. "Khrushchev is arriving here any minute, and the street is to be cleared. Drive out of here as fast as you can—or I may take you off the street myself."

He looked startled, but he obeyed. He started the car and pulled away, gunning the motor as much as he could. I turned and stepped into the tobacco shop. And none too soon. As I stood at the counter, I saw seven or eight men come running out of the Hall of Columns. They stopped to look around and caught sight of the Pobeda speeding away. They all piled into a ZIM and gave chase as soon as they could get it started.

I bought a package of cigarettes, walked down to the first block, and turned left. Another block away, I caught a bus. I rode it for about fifteen blocks, and got off. I caught another bus going the opposite way and stayed on for five blocks. Then I took a taxi.

Yuri was already with Ilya and Natasha when I reached the apartment. They all three looked relieved as I came in.

"You got it?" Natasha asked excitedly as she closed the door.

"Yes," I said. I took the map from my pocket and went immediately to her stove. I took a dish from the cupboard above, and then held a match to the map.

"Give me another minute," I told them. I went into the other room and changed back to my own clothes. I returned to them carrying the uniform.

"This must be destroyed as quickly as possible," I said.

"There is an incinerator in the building," Natasha said. "Just down the hall. I'll put it in there."

"Good girl," I said, handing the uniform to her. She took it and hurried out the door. She was back within a couple of minutes.

"The gun may still be a risk," I said, "but I'm going to need it, so I'll take that one. I think I got away all right, but they're going to start a big hunt, and I think I may have made one mistake." I told them about the taxi I'd taken, and they confirmed my guess. MVD men usually did not pay when they wanted to ride in cabs.

"But it may be all right," Yuri said. "The driver may be so pleased at getting paid that he will keep his mouth shut. And you did leave the taxi three blocks away."

"Maybe," I said. "But once he hears about the search for a phony MVD man, he may be frightened enough to report it. But the time it will take for

that to happen may be long enough. What about the car, Yuri?"

It is there," he said. "To take it will be easy."

"And the clothes?" I asked Natasha.

"In the other room. I should have told you so you wouldn't have to change twice."

"It's all right," I said. "I have a little time. Ilya, describe the streets on that route again."

"Yuri knows them even better than I do," he said.

We brought out the diagram that Ilya had made, and Yuri looked at it. He then gave me a minute, almost photographic description of the route of the car as it would take Cooper back to the prison. I finally settled on what looked like the best place, the last six blocks before the prison. From Yuri's description, it sounded narrow enough for what I had in mind. Yuri had said that two cars could barely pass. I put my finger on what looked to be about halfway along that stretch.

"What is along here, Yuri?" I asked.

"Workers' apartments," he said. "Perhaps one or two small stores. That is all."

"Are the people who live there apt to interfere?"

"If they see uniformed men fighting with another man, they'll lock the doors and pull the blinds down. They know that, in such a case it is better to be completely ignorant."

"In this case, I approve," I said. "Well, we'll leave in about an hour and a half." I went into the other room and got the gun. I wanted to check it over thoroughly, and be sure that everything was in perfect working order before I started.

"You will shoot the three guards?" Yuri asked eagerly.

"I don't know," I confessed. "I hope I don't have to shoot, but I may not be able to avoid it. I'll have to see how it works out."

I think Yuri looked disappointed, but we turned to other details. Natasha had checked and verified that the girl upstairs was still on her vacation. I would bring Cooper back to this apartment, then go up and pick the lock and move him there. Yuri had looked into airfields not too far from Moscow, and thought he'd found a small one that had possibilities. He was going to try to find out more. Ilya suggested that the best way of getting to the airfield would be to buy a small car on the black market, and drive as near there as possible. He thought that mere boldness might get us through, especially if we used a popular small car that many families used for their vacations. All the suggestions sounded possible, and we still had some time to decide on the best.

I changed into the old clothes, transferred my papers and other possessions. Then Yuri and I left. We took a bus, transferred to another one, and finally ended up in a section of Moscow I had never seen before. We walked three blocks after getting off

the second bus. Yuri finally stopped on a street corner, and pointed in the direction we were facing.

"There it is," he said proudly.

There was only one car parked on the street, so there was no chance of making a mistake. Yuri had certainly followed my instructions to the letter. I had never seen an older or shabbier car. It evidently dated from the time when the Russians were copying our Fords, and it looked as if they'd also copied the idea of repairing it with baling wire.

"Are you sure it will run?" I asked.

"Oh, it runs very good," Yuri said. "You want me to go show you?"

"I'll steal my own cars, Yuri," I said. "Where is the owner?"

"No the next block. Drinking vodka. He will be there for two hours or more. Nobody else will pay any attention. They hate him. So much that if the car doesn't start at once, they may rush out and give you a push."

"Now, how do I get to Nevka Street?"

His face lighted up. "You see, I told you that you need me. The way is very complicated, but I will show you."

"All right," I said, giving in. "But as soon as we're near the place, you'll have to get out."

He grinned, and we started down the street. We reached the car and climbed in. I hadn't really believed Yuri, but certainly no one made an outcry or paid any attention to us. I reached under the instrument panel, disconnected the ignition wires and wired them together. I stepped on the starter. I don't think I expected anything to happen, but the motor started at once. It didn't sound too bad. I put it in gear and we moved off.

We reached a spot near my destination without mishap. I stopped the car and told Yuri to get out. He put up a little argument, but finally did.

"I'll see you back at the apartment," I told him, and drove off. I had a few minutes to spare and drove slowly. I finally reached the spot about fifteen minutes before the car with Cooper was due to arrive there. Yuri had described the street perfectly. By turning and backing I finally got the car directly across the street. There was no room for another car to get by on either side. I killed the motor and got out.

I went around to the front and lifted the hood. Then I reached down and ripped the wires from the carburetor. While I was at it, I got some grease, and smeared it around on my hands and a little on my face. I put the hood down and went back to sit behind the wheel. I waited until I knew the car was about due, then began stepping on the starter.

I was aware when the car arrived, but I didn't look up. The starter whirred with a dismal sound. The horn blew on the other car. I looked up, waved hopelessly at the car and continued to press the starter.

The driver leaned out of the window. "Get out of the way," he or-

dered.

"I can't," I said. "It will not start."

"Then push it out of the way," he said.

I shrugged, and gave up with the starter. I made sure the hand brake was partly set, and climbed out. I got behind the car and pushed, but nothing happened. I saw the men in the car exchanging words, then the driver got out and came over to me.

"Come on," he said roughly. "We have to get this junk pile out of the street. We are on government business."

I gave him a sickly smile, and gestured futilely at the car again. He muttered under his breath but put his own shoulder against it. We both pushed, but I didn't work too hard and the car still didn't move. We struggled for a couple of minutes and finally the driver straightened up, looked at the other car and shrugged. There was some more conversation there, while I held my breath, then the rear door of the car opened and one of the KGB men got out. He left the door open. Inside I could see the other guard and Cooper.

The KGB man came over and scowled at me. "This time we'd better get this car out of the way, or we will arrest you. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

One of them got on either side of me, and put his shoulder to the car. I did the same, facing the one who had his back to me. As I pushed, I reached for my gun.

The car began to move slowly despite the brakes. I straightened up, and turned to face the man back of me. The gun barrel raked across his forehead before he even knew what was happening. Without waiting to see him fall, I whirled on the other one. He had already guessed that something had happened, and he was trying to turn and get his gun out at the same time. But he was at a disadvantage. He was off balance, and his back was toward me. Before he could make it, I brought the gun down on his head. He grunted and collapsed.

Two down, I muttered to myself, and looked at the car. The other KGB man had his gun out, and was lining it up on me. I dropped to the ground behind the MVD man. The other gun went off, and I heard the bullet over my head. By then I had him in my sights. I pulled the trigger gently, and saw him slump back against the seat. His gun dropped out of the car.

I jumped to my feet and ran over. The guard wasn't dead, or even unconscious. He was leaning against the back of the seat, one hand clutching his shoulder, the blood coming out between his fingers. He glared at me and tensed his body.

"Don't try it," I told him in Russian. "I can't miss you this close."

He struggled with himself and lost the battle. He stayed where he was, watching me closely. I turned my attention to Cooper. He was sitting there, looking as if he didn't believe what he saw.

"What is this?" he said as though

he didn't expect an answer.

"It's what they used to call the arrival of the U. S. Calvary," I told him in English. "A modern version of an old-fashioned rescue. Come on, Cooper, let's get out of here, fast!"

"I don't believe it," he said. "You read stuff like this in books but it doesn't happen. I'm only a sky jockey. Nobody is going to send to rescue me."

"Somebody did," I said impatiently. "Come on. We don't have all day. This place will be swarming with cops any minute."

He was shaking his head. "It was mighty nice of you to make the effort, but I'm not going with you!"

I had expected almost anything but this. "What?" I asked.

"I'm not going with you," he repeated.

"Why in the hell not?" I demanded.

"My dad and two brothers are landing here tonight," he said slowly. "What do you think would happen to them if I escaped?"

"They wouldn't dare do anything to them," I said.

He was shaking his head again. "I ain't going to risk it. My lawyer says I won't get more than seven years. I can do that and still find my family alive when I get home."

I looked at him with speculation. "You can't do it," he said, guessing what I was thinking. "If you try to knock me out and drag me, you'll never make it. . . . You may not anyway unless you leave at once."

He was right. I knew it, but I hated to be cheated after everything that had been done. But I didn't have any time. I kicked the guard's gun under the car and looked at the other two guards. They were still out. I turned and ran.

"Give my regards to the Statue of Liberty when you see her," Cooper called after me.

I didn't bother to answer. I knew I was going to have my hands full for the next few minutes, at least until I could get back to the apartment and change clothes. I ran swiftly for two zig-zag blocks, then slowed down to a fast walk. I threw the gun away. I wanted to keep it, but it would be too damning as evidence if it was found. Two more blocks away, I saw a small car parked with no one around it. I slipped into it, tore out the ignition wires and put them together. Then I drove away. As I left the curb I heard a shout behind me but ignored it.

I left the car at the curb a good ten blocks away from the apartment house, and went the rest of the way on foot, keeping a sharp eye out for cops. I was about two blocks away from the apartment when I suddenly saw Natasha on the street ahead of me. At the same time she saw me, and started for me as fast as she could walk. Her face was white with tension and I knew something had happened.

"What's wrong?"

"We can't stand here. She will walk away from here." She led the way along the first cross street. "They



arrested Ilya and Yuri. A half hour ago."

"Who?"

"KGB, I think. I was out and came back just in time to see them being led out into the streets."

"Do you know why?"

"No. One never knows. We may have been on a suspicion list, or someone may have made a report about us. Anything. And there are still guards on the apartment. Did you leave your papers there?"

"No."

"Then you can get away. That's why I waited on the street. I hoped I would see you before they found me."

"They won't find you now," I said.

"They will," she said. "No one can live in Russia without papers and now I have no papers I can use."

"We'll find a way," I said. "But first we've got to hole up somewhere. There's probably already a description of me around. Do you know of a hotel where they don't frown on a girl visiting a man in his room?"

"The Molenska, I think. I believe I heard Yuri talking about it once."

"All right. First, let's go somewhere where I can buy clothes."

We took the subway, getting off at a stop Natasha knew. She led the way to a small clothing store, and I succeeded in buying a suit that wasn't too bad. I bought a few other things and some clothes for her. There was no place for me to change there, but we went back to the subway and I changed in the men's room. I stuffed the old clothes under some paper in a trash basket and we went on to the hotel.

She was right about the hotel. The clerk looked at my papers and I signed the register. I explained that the girl wasn't staying long, and for a minute I thought he was going to wink at me.

"We'll be safe here for a while," I told her when we were in the room, "but we'd better not stay too long. The hunt for me will probably be overshadowed by the one for you, but there's always a chance someone will want to see your papers. And in the hunt for me, they may eventually get down to checking all the guests in hotels. I'll be all right until they make a call to Rostov. So we'd better put our heads to getting out of Moscow."

"How can I get out?" she asked. "And where would I go if I did get out?"

"To America with me," I said.

"America?"

"Why not? You're a member of the Russian underground, and you should be very welcome. You'll probably get a job right away. You could be valuable."

"You think so?" she exclaimed. Then her face fell. "It is awful to think that I might get out just when Ilya and Yuri have been caught."

"I don't think we can do anything about that," I said gently. "If I hadn't created such an uproar, I might have been able to—but not now. We'll have to go, Natasha. I'm sure that Ilya and Yuri would agree."

Then she came in to my arms and

cried until she was exhausted.

We stayed in the hotel for two days, while I thought up ways of escaping and discarded them. The search was too big for either a black market car or another stolen one. The papers were full of the story of the American agent who had tried to rescue Cooper, and it had even started Khrushchev off on another tirade of threats against America. In the meantime, everyone there had denied knowing anything about an agent.

Finally I hit on an idea I thought might work. Leaving Natasha in the hotel room, I spent two nights down at the trucking center in Moscow. Most of it was spent in little cafes, drinking vodka and listening to the truck drivers.

The third night we both went down. By this time I was familiar with which trucks were which. Standing in the shadows we watched a big six-wheeler being loaded for Leningrad. When it was loaded, the two drivers went into the cafe for a last drink. We slipped out of our shadow and quickly climbed in the back. We made ourselves as comfortable as we could on the boxes, and a few minutes later we were on our way.

All through the night the big truck roared along, and well into the next day. I had been watching the time and when it seemed we should be nearing Leningrad, I slipped to the rear and began to watch through the tarpaulin. When we finally reached Leningrad, we looked for our chance, and as the truck went around a sharp corner, we dropped off.

In Leningrad, we took a trolley to the center of the city, and I found a bus terminal. I bought two tickets to Tallin, just south of Leningrad, getting them one at a time and from different windows just in case someone wanted to see papers. But nothing happened and we were soon on the bus heading south.

Tallin was a little more of a problem. We were there two days and nights, and getting a little nervous, before I found a fisherman I could bribe to take us across the narrow neck of the Baltic to Finland. It wasn't the most ideal place to go, but I had little choice. That night the fisherman took us, and a couple of hours later we were at the American Embassy.

It took a little more doing to get them to awaken the Ambassador, but it was finally accomplished, and a handsome, gray-haired man, in a fancy bathrobe, was peering at us curiously.

"I'm a major in the United States Army," I told him. "For security reasons, I can't tell you any more than that at the moment. I want to make a phone call to General Sam Roberts, in Washington."

He must have heard of the general, but he didn't even blink. "That's a most unusual request, Major. Would you mind if the call was made in my presence?"

"No, sir."

"Then come on," he said. He led the

way to his office and indicated the phone. I picked it up and put in the call. It took a while for it to get through but, finally, there was General Roberts on the other end.

"General," I said, "this is your favorite chestnut puller. Have you been keeping up with your reading?"

"I'll say I have," he said. "We were worried about you, boy. I see where things didn't go quite right. How bad is it?"

"Not too bad. The first problem went off fine; the second didn't because the prize pupil didn't want to play."

He whistled. "Where are you now?"

"The American Embassy in Finland. And I'm homesick. Incidentally you remember the three friends I was to look up?"

"Yes."

"One of them is with me. The young lady. The other two were unable to make it."

"I see," he said. He was silent for a minute. "I guess maybe the best way is the simplest. Less possible complications. Tell the Ambassador to expect a call from the State Department. We'll see you soon. Got any money left?"

"Enough to get back on."

"Okay, boy. Goodbye."

He hung up, and I told the Ambassador about the expected call. He had some brandy brought in, and we all sat and waited together. The call came in a half hour. I don't know what he was told, but it seemed to cheer him up. "Well, Major," he said, slapping me on the back, when he'd finished, "why didn't you just tell me your troubles? No problem at all. We find a couple of rooms for you and the young lady, and everything will be fixed up in the morning."

I didn't know what he meant by that, but I kept my mouth shut. And I found out in the morning. Right after breakfast, we were handed two passports good for passage one way from Finland to America. The names on them weren't ours, but obviously the Ambassador didn't know that.

"Anybody can lose his passport, Major Johnson," he said. "No need to call Washington about that."

"I'm the cautious type," I said, and let it go at that.

That afternoon Natasha and I boarded a regular jet liner for America. When we'd unbuckled our seat belts and leaned back, I lit a cigarette. "Well, honey," I said, "you'll soon be in America."

"I know," she said. She sounded excited. "Will I see you again after we are there?"

"Definitely."

"It will be wonderful. Still—I think I may miss Moscow in the spring."

"And the red, red flowers?" I asked, quoting from the password I had used when I first met her. "Well, there will still be flowers blooming there, and maybe one day the whole country will bloom."

She smiled and put her head on my shoulder. A few minutes later she was asleep.